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INFO RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
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RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 5429
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING PRIORITY 3156
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO PRIORITY 3021
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RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RUEAWJA/DEPT OF JUSTICE WASHDC PRIORITY
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 ASHGABAT 000883

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

STATE FOR SCA/CEN, INL

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KCRM](#) [SNAR](#) [SOCI](#) [TX](#)

SUBJECT: TURKMENISTAN: DEA SPECIAL AGENT COMPLETES A LONG TERM TDY
IN ASHGABAT, TURKMENISTAN

¶1. (U) Sensitive but unclassified. Not for public Internet.

¶2. (SBU) SUMMARY: From March 10, 2009, through July 25, 2009, a DEA special agent conducted a long-term TDY in Ashgabat. The agent was involved in various activities with the Turkmen State Counter-Narcotics Service (SCNS) in order to maintain a working relationship between DEA and SCNS. DEA has established a solid presence in Turkmenistan by getting involved with SCNS on various CN issues. Further close cooperation with SCNS will likely pay dividends in the effort to establish a healthy bilateral relationship between DEA and the law-enforcement community of Turkmenistan. END SUMMARY.

¶3. (SBU) From March 10, 2009, through July 25, 2009, a DEA agent conducted a long-term TDY assignment at the U.S. Embassy in Ashgabat. The previous DEA TDY agent in Ashgabat made initial contact and built the foundation for a relationship with the SCNS. The new DEA TDY agent assumed responsibility of maintaining regular contact with SCNS and other law-enforcement agencies. He also escorted Turkmen officials on various trips to the United States. In November of 2008, DEA agent escorted SCNS delegation headed by Major Serdar Batyrov, the Acting Chief of SCNS, to Tampa, Florida and New York. While in New York, the delegation visited the DEA New York Field Division, where SCNS officers were introduced to different methods of combating illicit drug trafficking utilized by DEA. March 15-19, 2009, the agent escorted two SCNS officers to Tampa, Florida for the Consultative Staff Talks with the US Central Command.

¶4. (SBU) During the agent's tenure in Ashgabat, SCNS officers received multiple counter-narcotics trainings conducted by various participants from the United States. On March 4, 2009, the DEA agent conducted a Drug Identification training seminar for the SCNS officers at the SCNS Training Facility near Ashgabat. On June 9, 2009, a US Navy regional analyst from the Office of Naval Intelligence conducted a Maritime Smuggling Techniques training seminar to the SCNS officers at the SCNS Training Facility near Ashgabat. Between June 15-19, 2009, a DEA Senior Chemist conducted a UNODC sponsored Drug Precursor training seminar to the officers from SCNS and other law-enforcement agencies of Turkmenistan. Between June 22-26, 2009, three DEA special agents from the DEA

International Training department conducted a UNODC sponsored Interview and Interrogation training seminar for the officers of SCNS and other law enforcement agencies. On June 26, 2009, the DEA agent participated in a symbolic drug burn ceremony, which was led by Major Batyrov. The ceremony took place at a border guard installation near Ashgabat.

15. (SBU) DEA is planning to conduct at least one more training seminar for the SCNS officer before the end of fiscal year 2009. There are several events scheduled to take place in fiscal year 2010 under the OMC umbrella. Recently, the DEA agent received a request from Major Batyrov to conduct additional training seminars for the SCNS chemists and K-9 handlers. The training plan is being worked on by DEA/INL personnel.

16. (SBU) During his stay in Ashgabat, the DEA agent have officially met with the heads of SCNS, State Border Service (SBS), and State Customs Service (SCS) in order to broaden counter-narcotics relationships between DEA and local law-enforcement agencies. DEA is striving to maintain a good relationship with SCNS by providing SCNS officers with appropriate training, supplying SCNS with tactical equipment, and escorting SCNS officers on multiple trips to the United States for various CN related functions.

DEALING WITH SCNS

17. (SBU) SCNS has welcomed all assistance from the U.S. Government with open arms. Any contact with SCNS and/or any other government entity of Turkmenistan must be accomplished via a Diplomatic Note. A Dip Note is usually submitted to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) no later than 4-6 weeks from the proposed date of an event.

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Per SCNS policy, if a foreign agency is in possession of valuable, time sensitive information regarding narcotics trafficking activities in Turkmenistan, the information should be officially submitted to the Central Asian Regional Information and Coordination Center (CARICC) for corroboration.

SCNS' RELATIONSHIP WITH OTHER TURKMEN LAW ENFORCEMENT

18. (SBU) When asked regarding the cooperation between SCNS and other law-enforcement agencies of Turkmenistan, the DEA agent was advised that inter-agency cooperation does in fact exist. According to SCNS, high ranking officials, SCNS has a good working relationship with most law-enforcement agencies in Turkmenistan. SCNS officials told us that when a law-enforcement agency seizes narcotics, that agency contacts SCNS and informs SCNS of the seizure. SCNS officers in turn respond to the crime scene and take over the investigation (i.e. take possession of seized drugs, interview of arrested persons, collection of evidence, etc). SCNS is the leading agency that conducts all narcotics investigations in Turkmenistan. At this moment, neither SCNS nor any other law-enforcement agency in Turkmenistan has an active intelligence sharing system with DEA. At this point, the only way to receive somewhat accurate information is to contact third party agencies, such as UNODC and/or CARICC.

19. (SBU) Although SCNS cooperates with other Turkmen law enforcement agencies, the overall experience of the agencies in CN matters is rather poor. For the longest time, Turkmenistan denied that narcotics were a problem in the country. SCNS is a relatively young agency. It was established in January 2008. The majority of high-ranking officers working for SCNS have been transferred from other law enforcement agencies to fill vacant positions. Most of the officers have minimal or no prior CN experience. Although the SCNS officials have recently reported successful results in combating the flow of illicit drugs, SCNS staff is in desperate need of additional training to adequately perform their duties as narcotics officers.

110. (SBU) COMMENT: DEA should and will continue to maintain a working relationship with SCNS and provide them with all the support they need. DEA is not alone in this effort. Other U.S. government agencies such as INL and US CENTCOM have contributed significantly to the overall success of SCNS and other law enforcement agencies

combating illicit drugs in Turkmenistan. In the past, INL assisted Turkmen MOI with training for their forensic chemists. Under the umbrella of ICITAP, INL coordinated with DEA chemists to come to Ashgabat to conduct the training and to supply MOI forensic lab with vital equipment. At this moment, DEA and INL are working on a project to provide appropriate training to SCNS chemists based on a personal request from Major Batyrov. INL is also working on supplying SCNS K-9 officers with narcotics/money-detecting dogs. DEA has established a solid presence in Turkmenistan by getting involved with SCNS on various CN issues. Further close cooperation with SCNS will likely pay dividends in the effort to establish a healthy bilateral relationship between DEA and the law-enforcement community of Turkmenistan. END COMMENT.

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